

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

[No. 17 of 1876.]

REPORT ON NATIVE PAPERS

FOR

The Week ending the 22nd April 1876.

THE *Suhrid*, of the 12th April, notices a serious outbreak of cholera in Muktagachá and adjacent villages owing to drought and excessive heat. The like of it has not been seen for the last six or seven years.

SUHRID,
April 12th, 1876.

2. The same paper is at a loss to understand why Baboo Bepin Behary Mookerjee has been transferred so soon after his appointment as manager to the estate of the late Báboo Rám Kishor Acháryya. It is feared that this is due to the efforts of an European, who is striving hard to secure the post for himself.

SUHRID.

3. The *Bhárat Mihir*, of the 13th April, thus writes on the subject of "Taxation in India":—We cannot appreciate the philanthropy which, while it advocates the taxation of such a necessary article as salt, is opposed to the income tax. The only objection to the latter is that, being a direct tax, it is not suited to a country like India, and that it affords room for the practice of oppression. The salt tax is indirect, and as such is not felt to be a burden. But there is this to be said for the income tax, that, unlike the road-cess and the tax on salt, it does not rob and ruin the poor, but affects the wealthier classes only. The British drain India of almost all her wealth, while they spend but little for her good. We do not agree with those who judge of these matters according to the liberal maxims of political economy alone. The loud cry that was raised against the income tax all over India emanated chiefly from the Anglo-Indians and the Anglo-Indian Press that represents their interests.

BHARAT MIHIR,
April 13th, 1876.

4. In the course of an editorial on the budget for 1876-77, the same paper observes that Lord Northbrook has shewn remarkable ability in the management of the finances. Since the introduction of the budget system by Mr. James Wilson, the people have been uneasy every year. There was no stability in the finances during the administrations of Lord Lawrence and his successor. The people, however, have reposed such unbounded confidence in Lord Northbrook that, even the occurrence of the famine did not produce uneasiness in their minds. They have had all along the conviction that, with Lord Northbrook at the head of the administration, the distress would be tided over by some means, and yet there would be no increase of taxation. And the late Viceroy has really shewn by his action that the confidence of the public was not misplaced.

BHARAT MIHIR.

5. The *Burdwan Pracháriká*, of the 31st March, makes the following remarks in reference to the powers proposed to be conferred on the Magistrates by the Dramatic Performances' Bill:—Should Government vest inferior Magistrates with the powers provided for in the Bill, it is to be feared that those powers will be frequently abused. The great majority of the

BURDWAN
PRACHARIKA,
March 31st, 1876.

plays being written in the vernaculars of the country, it will be indeed a difficult task for a Foreign Government to understand their true purport: a passage may, for instance, be condemned without there being any thing objectionable in it. It is therefore extremely desirable that the persons entrusted with the task of judging of the merits of a play should be thoroughly proficient in the vernaculars.

BURDWAN
PRACHARIKA,
April 14th, 1876.

6. The *Burdwan Pracháriká*, of the 14th April, thus writes on the Bengal Municipal Bill:—Though the provisions of this Bill may not be extended to villages, yet in the towns where it will be enforced, there will be no end of oppressions. Government should not have framed this Bill so hastily, but should have allowed more time to the public for an expression of their opinion on it. In spite of the fact that, the towns abound with men of education and intelligence, and that redress may also be obtained of grievances without much difficulty, the inhabitants are frequently harassed by municipal oppression. Since such is the case in towns, we may conjecture how happy(?) the people would be should the Bill be introduced into villages.

BURDWAN
PRACHARIKA.

7. The same paper thus comments on the extension of the Chowkeedaree Act to the Burdwan district:—Hitherto villagers were not required to pay anything in the shape of salary to the chowkeedars; they had only a grant of land for their services. But under the new arrangement a fixed monthly salary, raised by the imposition of a new tax on the people, will be given in lieu of the lands, which will now be leased out to the zemindars at half their former rental. But it may be asked, what is the good of fattening the already rich zemindars by taxing the poor ryots? If it be really the desire of Government to allow the chowkeedars a fixed income, the lands which have been hitherto in their possession should be leased out to the best advantage. Such a course would not necessitate recourse to any fresh taxation; otherwise the extension of the Chowkeedaree Act will but increase the difficulties of the ryots, already groaning under the burden of the road-cess. Public interests will considerably suffer from the chowkeedar being obliged always to please the members of the punchayet. Again, on the plea of taxation and duty, the different factions and parties which generally abound in a village will try to harass each other to the utmost extent of their power. It therefore behoves Government, before extending the Chowkeedaree Act all over the district, to consult the opinions of the local public regarding this measure.

MOORSHEDABAD
PRATINIDHI,
April 14th, 1876.

8. The *Moorshedabad Pratinidhi*, of the 14th April (a new paper, published at Berhampore), makes the following observations on the Agrarian Disturbances' Bill:—No effort has been made in the Bill to put a stop to the chief causes of all rent disputes between the landlords and tenants. It seems to be the conviction of Government that the evil has originated in the transfer of rent suits to the civil courts. This, however, is not the case. The occurrence of such disputes is solely due to the fact that the relation between landlord and tenant is not well defined. There would have been nothing of this complication had these relations been as clearly defined as those between Government and the zemindars. While these, on the one hand, always seek to enhance the rent, the ryots, on the other, seek to have it lowered, or at least to prevent the enhancement. Since such is the case there would be no scope for dispute, if all the circumstances under which an enhancement or a reduction of the rent rate might be secured were clearly laid down and made intelligible to both parties. The existing law, however, is so vague that a single passage is capable of bearing a thousand

different interpretations. The Agrarian Disturbances' Bill, as it is, will only serve a temporary purpose. It does not provide for the prevention of rent disputes.

9. In the course of an editorial on the Road-Cess, the *Pratikár*, of the 14th April, remarks that the people are put to considerable inconvenience from the collectors assessing all revenue-free estates, and those that pay a revenue of less than a hundred rupees to Government, at a higher value than they would really fetch. And though provision has been made for protesting against the assessment within a specified time, still it is practically nullified from the valuation papers being not regularly issued to the parties concerned. The proprietors of such estates, again, are for the most part poor and ignorant men, who know but very little of laws and regulations. Hence objections are not urged within the time specified. Through the carelessness of the assessors also, houses, which are not liable to pay the cess, are assessed.

PRATIKAR,
April 14th, 1876.

10. A correspondent of the *Education Gazette*, of the 14th April, thus writes on the levy of the Road-Cess in the Burdwan district:—Most of the people in the mofussil are so thoroughly steeped in ignorance that they have not yet come to know anything about the road-cess. The authorities are indeed doing their duty by issuing a proclamation in every village as to the rate at which the cess will be levied; but it is to be feared that no good will come of it. These notifications are always distributed by means of police constables; who, from a notion that the zemindar's cutcherry is the fittest place to put them up, deliver them to his gomastah. The latter, as may be easily conjectured, locks them up in his box, for it is his interest to keep the tenantry in ignorance of the rates fixed by Government, and levy the cess at a rate which is far in excess of what is laid down by law.

EDUCATION GAZETTE,
April 14th, 1876.

11. A correspondent of the *Grámbártá Prakashiká*, of the 15th April, writing from Bhárengá, a village under station Mathura, in the Pubna district, notices the sufferings of the inhabitants owing to a lack of water-supply from the absence of good tanks. The river Jumná is at a great distance, and it is almost impossible for them to go to it in this burning sun to draw water. Government is earnestly besought to cause the excavation of a tank in the village.

GRAMBARTA
PRAKASHIKA,
April 15th, 1876.

12. The following is extracted from the *Hindu Hitoishini*, of the 15th April:—Even to this day the French call us the "servants of the merchants,"—nay, some Englishmen also honor us with the epithet of "D—d niggers." A reflection on our present and past condition will make this subject yet more clear. Since, by means of treachery, cunning, or force of arms, or anything else, the East India Company conquered India, we have become "servants of the merchants." But after 1858, when the Queen assumed the direct government of this Empire, we were gradually set free from this reproach. It seems, however, that the name will stick to us for ever. The merchants of Manchester have at length, with the aid of the Marquis of Salisbury, succeeded in their efforts, and Lord Lytton has come out with full instructions to favor them. The import duty on Manchester piece-goods will be given up to gratify them. In other words, the income of Government from this source will be paid them as revenue. And hence the title of "servants of merchants."

HINDU HITOISHINI,
April 15th, 1876.

13. In reviewing the chief events of the year 1282 B.S., just now ended, the *Sahachar*, of the 17th April, writes the following:—During the

SAHACHAR,
April 17th, 1876.

able administration of Lord Northbrook there has been peace all over the empire, and no sound of disturbance was heard from any quarter. It is to be extremely regretted that that great man left us for his native land with the close of the year. Of the chief events of the last year, the visit of the Prince of Wales to India must be regarded as foremost in importance. It is to be hoped that it will be fraught with beneficial consequences to India. In its legislative capacity, Government has done some improper and unjust acts; of these the new Municipal Act, the Presidency Magistrates' Bill, and the Dramatic Performances' Bill are the chief. We hope that in the ensuing year Government will gradually come to perceive its error. Her Majesty has expressed a desire to assume the title of "Empress of India." The assumption of this title will render the ties which bind the two countries, England and India, close than ever.

SARACHAR,
April 17th, 1876.

14. The same paper thus writes in an editorial on "Lord Lytton":—On the first day of the new Bengali year, and in an auspicious moment, Lord Lytton assumed charge of the office of Viceroy of India, and, adopting a new course, took the opportunity to lay before the public a prospectus of his duties. We have read his speech with pleasure. Lord Lytton may rest assured that, as far as natives are concerned, he will constantly receive their support. We have been, of course, uneasy since the news of his appointment reached us, and we have got an impression that, moved by party considerations, the Marquis will sacrifice the interests of India to secure those of Manchester. Lord Lytton's speeches in London and Bombay have not, we confess, removed our uneasiness. We, however, hope that he will attend to the preservation of the interests of this country; and if he does so, the natives will doubtless support him. Our rulers ought to know that the real benefit of the country is the first object to be secured, if our rulers desire to be remembered by future generations, and to live in the page of history; for their reputation, as well as censure, depends entirely on the opinions of the natives. Let Lord Lytton act with a knowledge of the condition of the country, and he will be entitled to our gratitude and good wishes. On the other hand, not only Lord Lytton, but the whole English nation, would be scandalized should the Marquis of Salisbury succeed in his efforts. In the name of the people, we welcome Lord Lytton with due honors. We are indeed powerless; but if to gain the sincere gratitude of a great nation be the true reward of a Ruler, Lord Lytton will receive it, if his acts do but agree with his professions.

SARACHAR.

15. The same paper makes the following observations on the "New Municipal Bill, and Sir Stuart Hogg":—We have shown before what evil consequences might be apprehended from the passing of the new Municipal Bill; and our apprehensions are now being gradually realized. It is to be exceedingly regretted that even a person of Lord Northbrook's sagacity has given his assent to this Bill. Natives and Europeans made a united protest against the powers of the Commissioner of Police and the Chairman of the Municipality being vested in the same person. Sir Richard Temple, however, did not pay the least heed to this. Lord Northbrook also followed his judgment. It is not our purpose, in the present article, to dwell on all the objectionable features of the Act, but we shall content ourselves with only a few observations on the evil consequences that may accrue from the powers of the two officers being vested in one person. One instance will suffice for our purpose. By virtue of a decree lately given by Mr. Jones, one of the Judges of the Calcutta Small Cause Court, against a shop-keeper in the

Municipal Market, the bailiff of the court went to attach his property, but was forbidden to do so by a Municipal officer under orders from Sir Stuart Hogg. The bailiff thereupon sought the assistance of the Police. This was, however, persistently refused, on the ground that, as rents were due to the municipality, his property would not be allowed to be attached or removed by any decree of the Small Cause Court. So that Sir Stuart Hogg has plainly shown a contempt of the law, and prevented it from being carried into effect: and this he has been enabled to do only by reason of his double office.

16. The *Soma Prakásh*, of the 17th April, writes the following in its opening editorial:—We are exceedingly gratified to observe that no other Lieutenant-Governor ever paid so much attention to secure the advancement of the natives as Sir Richard Temple. Ever since his accession to office, he has sought to encourage them in various ways. He is showing his affection and kindness towards them by means of occasional invitations, and by lending them a helping hand in all beneficial undertakings. One cannot help being grateful to him on observing how earnestly he is striving to secure the success of Dr. Sarkar's Science Association. He has materially assisted it by his donation of Rs. 500, and his good example is bearing fruit by leading others to subscribe in furtherance of the same purpose. By the establishment of an art gallery at Calcutta, he has inaugurated a highly beneficial movement.

SOMA PRAKASH,
April 17th, 1878.

17. The same paper writes in another article:—The action of the Bengal Government has equally surprised and disappointed us. First, the Lieutenant-Governor is gradually increasing the official element in the Legislative Council. Closely following the appointment of Baboo Rámshankar Sen, another official, Baboo Ishwara Chandra Mittra, has been given a seat in the Legislative Council. We are by no means, however, wanting in regard or esteem for these two able officers of Government,—nay, we have all along praised their honesty and ability. It is the system that we condemn, for it is likely to give rise to many injurious consequences. (1) A desire of over-legislation, which is now noticeable on the part of Government, makes it highly necessary that certain representative men should be present in the Legislative Council. This will be clearly perceived if we only bring to mind the immense amount of good performed singly by Baboo Kristo Das Pak, the worthy editor of the *Hindoo Patriot*, in the deliberations of this assembly. The presence of a few more like him will do much greater good. Though those that are now appointed are natives, still the people do not look upon them as their representatives. At best they would be laughed at as but too obsequious followers of their master, even if they acted independently. We indeed love and esteem men like Baboo Rámshankar Sen, and would be very glad to see them honored and rewarded, but we are sorry that we cannot express our satisfaction with the way in which His Honor has thought to honor them. Nay, we are the more sorry, inasmuch as we love Baboo Rámshankar Sen. Sir Richard's action has only resulted in the gratuitous exposure of these honest and worthy officials to the hostility and scorn of the people. Moreover, it seems to be also an infliction, as it were, on these competent and able men to turn them into mere machines. If it was meant to reward them, could not that have been done in some other way? We are but laughing in our sleeves at this trick of our rulers. They have manufactured several toys for coaxing the people of India, who are but children. A seat in the Legislative Council is one of these toys. This is indeed an inexpensive

SOMA PRAKASH.

mode of rewarding the services of deserving officers, but it really pains us when our own relatives and friends are thus put into a difficult position to draw over the public. Our rulers do not like to give rewards which may develop the ability and intelligence of the recipient, afford him scope for the exercise of sympathy and honesty, or help him to the attainment of greatness, or at least such as may enable him to secure a decent livelihood. The highest reward they choose to grant able and honest officers is to fetter their hands and feet, and subject them to trouble.

Secondly, of late the Lieutenant-Governor has commenced passing the Bills framed by the local legislature with extreme haste: almost every Saturday some two or three Bills are said to be passed. But why is this haste? Has the Municipal Bill taught him the necessity of such a measure? If there had been present in the Legislative Council, members chosen by the natives themselves, they would not much care for such haste, seeing that their opinions had been laid before the Council; but since Government appoints its own officers and adherents to the Council, it should, before passing any Bill, wait for an expression of public opinion. Means should also be used for enabling them clearly to understand the purport of the Bills. The conduct of Government, however, does not show that it is making any such efforts.

SOMA PRAKASH,
April 17th, 1876.

18. We make the following extracts from an editorial in the same paper, on the "Oppressions of the Indigo-planters":—They have a close connection with the poverty of the people of Behar. There are, however, other considerations. First, Behar is very densely populated, and the wages of labor are in consequence extremely low. Even in years when the rains are timely, the people cannot afford to have more than one meal a day. Secondly, in Behar the rent rate is higher than in Bengal, and the system under which the rent is collected is also curious. In several places of the province the crop is equally divided between the landlord and the tenant. In unfavorable years, indeed, the zemindar's income becomes reduced, but only to be again made up in years of plenty. The ill-fated tenant alone has no means of saving. If a fixed rent rate were introduced in lieu of the existing system, the ryots might in good years be enabled to lay up something. For these reasons almost all classes in Behar—the peasantry, the laborers, and others—are extremely poor; they are sunk into deep and chronic poverty. Is it possible to bear any further oppression? The inhuman and wicked indigo-planters, however, do not fail to oppress the tenantry. Those living around the factories are brought by force to the planter (*Sahib*). A person possessing some two or five beeghas of land cannot escape from his hands. He is asked to sow indigo on a portion of this land, while the order is backed up by clubs and the *shyámchánd*: a poor tenantry have not, of course, the courage to disobey such an order. The *Sahib* engages to pay Rs. 10 per beegha, and an agreement to this effect is made with the ryot. Rs. 4 are paid in advance, and the remaining sum is promised after the cutting of the plant. The ryot, however, has to pay about four times the sum advanced for preparing and weeding the land, and cutting the crop. He also becomes a loser in another way. The other lands in his possession cannot be cultivated in good time by reason of his ploughs and oxen being engaged on the indigo-field. He can at best reap an insufficient crop, grown on land of inferior quality, and after the lapse of the proper season. He is moreover required to deliver the indigo at the factory, generally at his own expense. The remainder of the sum which now becomes due to him is again considerably reduced on several pretences.

Now, all this is nothing new; the conduct of the indigo-planters is everywhere the same. We simply wonder that such oppressions could still continue to exist. The Anglo-Indian newspapers, as well as Government, go into raptures at the name of the indigo-planters. To please Government they offered some contributions during the famine, and this has misled Government: and so their oppressions go unnoticed. There is no mention of this subject in Mr. Macdonnell's elaborate report on the condition of the people in Behar. These oppressions have now led many of the tenantry to emigrate to Nepal. And what is their fault? In addition to the scarcity of food owing to over-population, and the oppression of the zemindars, there is this grievance. And where else should famines break out, if not here? In the indigo districts there are no newspapers, nor are there any educated and independent men, so that we cannot expect to see an end of the miseries of Behar within a short time. Government would be but involving itself in a most heinous sin if it remained indifferent to it, and such a course would be a reproach to their Christianity and their civilization. The efforts that are now made will hardly do any good. What is the good of showing off its learning and intelligence in reports merely to blind the people? We lose all faith in such reports when we remember the way in which they are compiled. If Government really desires to save the people of Behar from their poverty, let enquiries be made into this matter.

19. A correspondent of the *Sulabha Samáchar*, of the 18th April, notices the scarcity of water in villages Sitapore, Bamanda, Tetihati, Kaparpore, Daharhati, and others in the district of Hooghly. The Káná, a branch of the Damuder, which flowed through these villages, formerly supplied them with water, but the rainfall having been insufficient during the last four years, and the silting up of its mouth at Selamábád, have left only a small quantity of water in the Káná. Government is earnestly besought to set open this silted up channel.

SULABHA SAMACHAR
April 18th, 1876.

20. Adverting to the appointment of Baboo Ishwara Chandra Mitter to the Bengal Legislative Council, the *Samáchar Chandriká*, of the 17th April asks: will no other except Government officials be appointed to the Legislative Council? These are the men who generally cry "Ditto" to what other members say. They cannot be expected to do any substantial good.

SAMACHAR
CHANDRIKA,
April 17th, 1876.

21. The *Urdu Guide*, in publishing the new jury list, takes occasion to remark that it seems very strange to find the names of only one Mahomedan as entitled to sit on the special, and sixteen on the common jury—making seventeen in all;—from which fact the editor would infer that the Sheriff was able to find only seventeen respectable men of the above class in the town of Calcutta, and hopes that this may be rectified in the future list.

URDU GUIDE,
April 15th, 1876.

22. The *Behár Bandhu*, in alluding to the case of oppression and cruelty by the Patna police, wherein one Makhiní, who was dishonored and maltreated, was the complainant and some policemen the defendants, regrets to say that the sentences of three years, two years against the constable, and suspension of the Inspector were quite inadequate to meet the ends of justice or to prevent a repetition of such crimes.

BEHAR BANDHU,
April 12th, 1876.

BENGALI TRANSLATOR'S OFFICE,
The 22nd April 1876.

JOHN ROBINSON,
Government Bengali Translator.

*List of Native Newspapers received and examined for the Week ending the
22nd April 1876.*

No.	Name.	Place of publication.	Monthly, weekly, or otherwise.	Date.
1	"Suhrid" ...	Muktágáchá, Mymensing	Weekly	12th April 1876.
2	"Hindu Ranjiká" ...	Bauleah, Rájshahye	Ditto	12th ditto.
3	"Bhárat Mihir" ...	Mymensing	Ditto	13th ditto.
4	"Burdwan Pracháriká" ...	Burdwan	Ditto	31st March, 7th & 14th April 1876.
5	"Pratikár" ...	Berhampore	Ditto	14th April 1876.
6	"Moorshedabad Pratinidhi" ...	Ditto	Ditto	14th ditto.
7	"Education Gazette" ...	Hooghly	Ditto	14th ditto.
8	"Grámbártá Prákáshiká" ...	Comercolly	Ditto	15th ditto.
9	"Hindu Hitoishini" ...	Dacca	Ditto	15th ditto.
10	"Dacca Prákásh" ...	Ditto	Ditto	16th ditto.
11	"Soma Prákásh" ...	Bhowanipore	Ditto	17th ditto.
12	"Sahachar" ...	Calcutta	Ditto	17th ditto.
13	"Sulabha Samáchár" ...	Ditto	Ditto	18th ditto.
14	"Samáchár Chandriká" ...	Ditto	Bi-Weekly	13th and 17th April 1876.
15	"Sambád Prabhákar" ...	Ditto	Daily	13th to 18th ditto.
16	"Sambád Purnachandrodaya" ...	Ditto	Ditto	12th to 21st ditto.
17	"Urdu Guide" (<i>in Urdu</i>) ...	Ditto	Weekly	15th April 1876.
18	"Behár Bandhu" (<i>in Hindi</i>)	Bankipore, Patna	Ditto	12th ditto.

Bengal Secretariat Press.